

February 11, 1862.

Dr. J. E. Gray, V.P., in the Chair.

Mr. Gould exhibited a specimen of a Lyre-bird (*Menura*) from Port Phillip, and pointed out the characters in which it differed from the closely allied *Menura superba* of New South Wales. Mr. Gould proposed the name *Menura victoriæ* for this new species.

The Secretary called the attention of the Society to the fine series of Snakes recently received from their Corresponding Member, Dr. Wucherer, of Bahia. It embraced specimens of the following species, as determined by Dr. Günther:—

*Epicrates cenchris.*

*Scytale coronatum.*

*Xenodon typhlus.*

*Philodryas reinhardtii.*

*Xenodon rhabdocephalus.*

The following papers were read:—

1. ON THE ASSUMPTION OF THE MALE PLUMAGE BY THE FEMALE OF THE COMMON PHEASANT. BY EDWARD HAMILTON, M.D., F.Z.S., F.L.S., ETC.

The late Mr. Yarrell, in a communication read before the Royal Society in 1827, "On the Assumption of the Male Plumage in Female Pheasants," drew attention to the fact that this anomaly was not necessarily the accompaniment of age—*i. e.*, in old hen-birds which had done laying; but states that it may occur sometimes from an original internal defect, sometimes from subsequent disease, and sometimes from old age. Dr. Butter, who had written previously on this subject, had stated that this peculiarity only occurred in old birds; and John Hunter, in "An Account of an Extraordinary Pheasant," had the same opinion. He considers that in such cases the female puts on the *secondary* properties of the male, and observes that some classes are more liable than others to this change. He goes on to state "that in animals just born, or very young, there are no peculiarities to distinguish one sex from the other, exclusive of what relates to the organs of generation, which can only be in those who have external parts; and that towards the age of maturity the discriminating changes before mentioned begin to appear, the male then losing that resemblance he had to the female in various secondary properties: this particularly applies to birds. It is evidently the male which at this time recedes from the female, every female being at the age of maturity more like the young of the same species than the male is observed to be; and if the male is deprived of the testes when growing, he retains more of the original youthful form, and therefore more resembles the female. From hence it might be supposed that the female character contains more truly the specific properties of the animal than the male; but the